

Romans 15:1-7 Receive One Another

The first 7 verses of Chapter 15 are connected to Chapter 14 – and I wish last week I had the time to cover all of it.

A)But I didn't – so I am going to attempt tonight to do a quick review of chapter 14 to tie these two passages together

B)In our study last time – Chapter 14 we looked at Paul's instruction to the church in Rome – concerning their conduct in Disputable matters.

V.1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

C)Doubtful things or disputable matters – are those things that are not laid out clearly in scripture as right or wrong.

D)They are those things that are more left to preference, conscience and personal conviction.

The Disputable things that the church in Rome was dealing with were:

A)To eat or not eat meat V.2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.

B)Days of worship V.5 and the consumption of wine seems to be an issue – V.21

C)Today: Baptism, eschatology - Alcohol consumption – TV movies, music, dress / sporting events – many more

D)But the main issue that Paul seems to focus on is the eating of meat.

1)Note V.2 Paul refers to the person who thinks – only eat veggies as the weaker believer.

Note: The issue here was not dietary – or health oriented.

A)More of a religious conviction.

B)In the church in Rome – made of of both Jews and Gentiles.

C)It would seem that some of the Jewish Christians were still beholden to the Dietary regulations of the OT

1)But even took them to the extreme – which often happens

D)In the OT God did not want the Jewish people to eat certain meat

1)But these believers in Rome were against all meat for some reason- Legalism often goes to extremes

Paul refers to them V.2 as the weaker believer because they were failing to understand – IN Christ we are Free!

A)Jesus taught in Mark 7 it is not what enters into the mouth or stomach that makes us unclean – but that which proceeds out of the heart!

B)Paul refers to that in 14: 14 I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; (Nothing wrong with meat)

12 “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. 13 “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. 1 Corinthians 6:12-13

C)Paul's point – Liberty is great! –

D)but in any liberty that you are exercising – need to make sure don't become enslaved to it

1)Eating can turn to gluttony – consuming wine can lead to drunkenness and addiction.

The brothers and sisters in Rome who were seeking to make eating meat a major issue were failing to understand the freedom we have in Jesus.

A)But at first glance I think it seems odd that Paul would refer to the more rigid brother/sister as the weaker – believer

B)Our tendency is to think the person who is not partaking in certain things/ big deal about it –

1)they are more spiritual – more holy

C)Paul wants us to know that the opposite is often true –

1)They are weaker because they don't understand the freedom we have in Christ.

Note this: Paul is not writing to correct their view point per se but he is writing to show how the

weak and the strong need to RECEIVE one another

A) What Paul says to them is applicable as it relates to any disputable matter that we might be dealing with in the church today.

B) IN Chapter 14 V. 3 and V. 13 – Paul sums up his point of what both groups attitude should be

3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.

A) To the strong who realize there is liberty in Christ to eat meat –

B) Paul says **don't despise** – don't look down on – those who don't eat meat

C) To the weaker brother – who feels like that isn't a liberty that we have –

1) Paul says don't judge = Judge to condemn – those who do

D) Both need to remember that God has received – the other –

1) Implication: receive one another because God has received both of you in Christ

V.4-12 His instruction to the weak – not judge by remembering certain key things

A) The weak brother or sister needs to remember

#1 V.4 God is the only Judge – we are all his servants

➤ So we should not judge others who have different convictions than you do – disputable things

#2 V.5 They need to clearly think through our position and make sure it is a Biblical principle and not just our own personal opinion/ preference

Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.-

#3 V.6-8 They need to remember that Christians can have differing opinions on disputable matters and still both be right with the Lord!

A) They are to agree to disagree – agreeably

B) In Essentials – Unity; Non essentials – Liberty; All things – Charity.

C) But Then – he builds upon this in V.13

13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

A) To the weaker brother – **he repeats** don't Judge to condemn anymore - Be done with your critical spirit

B) And to the strong he says – more than to not despise

C) The strong have a greater responsibility to not put a stumbling block in the way of your brother or a cause for him to fall.

D) The word for "stumbling block" means something carelessly left about over which someone stumbles,

1) A cause is literally **a cause to fall** – tripped up fall into sin

E) When liberty is flaunted – or exercised carelessly it can cause a brother or sister to stumble or fall

As the chapter unfolds Paul explains exactly what that looks like – stumbling block or a cause to fall

A) V.15 15 Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.

B) Paul says – you can stumble a brother or cause him to fall – **by grieving him** –

1) It is wrong – because not walking in Love – when you purposely grieve a brother with your liberty

C) Then in V. 21 – he builds on the concept - 21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.

D) V.21 He stumbles or is offended

1) The stronger brother needs to be concerned about offending his weaker brother

In other words the stronger brother – can't take this position:

A) It is not my problem he doesn't understand the liberty that we have in Christ!

B) He just needs to grow up

C) Paul says: No you are wrong to deliberately offend your brother!

Then he says at the end of V.21 or if he is made weak

A) That phrase is made weak is one word in the Greek – **that means to make sick or become impotent or powerless**

B) This is the implication: When a believer carelessly exercises their liberty in front of someone who doesn't have that liberty

C) It can result in a strong temptation for that person – that they end up giving into it –
1) doing something they should not do – doing something that they don't have the liberty to do

Consuming Alcohol is a good example:

A) Some people who don't have that liberty – their past addiction – never again

B) One drink can put them over the edge –
1) When they are in a setting that where it is served – not good for them. –

C) Their resolve is weakened – that is the idea there.

Then Paul adds one more insight that the strong need to consider in V.23

A) **14 I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; (Nothing wrong with meat) but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. (His convictions- not wrong for him)**

B) **23 But he who doubts (He is not sure he has that liberty) so he is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; (conviction) for whatever is not from faith is sin.**

C) So my liberty in eating the meat is causing him/her to sin against their own conscience if they also eat

D) That is a lot for the strong to take into consideration in order to walk in love/ these matters

So how are the strong to exercise their liberty and not cause the weak to stumble?

#1 we make a commitment to walk in love in regards to our liberty v.16-17

#2 The strong need to remember that they are first and foremost serving Christ V.18

#3 Remembering the work of God is more important than your personal preference. V.20

A) Don't want to be guilty of Destroying the work of God in another person's life

B) Destroy = to ruin

#4 The strong practice their liberty in private v.21-22

21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. 22 Do you have faith? (Belief or conviction) **Have it to yourself before God.** Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

You have liberty in a Disputable matter – Out of love practice it in private

A) Don't flaunt it – Instagram / Facebook – Paul's day –

B) Enjoying a 10oz ribeye – Whoa

C) The meat thing is Not an issue for us today – but there are other things

1) Out of love keep it to yourself

Is that being hypocritical ? No it is being loving!

A) I am committed to walking in Love –

B) So I am concerned – I don't unnecessarily cause them to be grieved or offended

C) I don't want to weaken them by encouraging them to exercise a liberty they don't have

1) Or to sin against their own conscience by doing something they don't have liberty to do

D) Not worth it – so I am going to exercise my liberty in private.

Well the Strong might say – that doesn't seem fair – that seems like the weak Win –

A) We are the ones doing all the bending – I actually had someone say that to me this week.

B) Answer is Yes and NO! – It is actually your opportunity to be the most Christ like –

C) Which is exactly the argument that Paul takes into chapter 15

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Phillips Translation - **We who are strong in the faith ought to shoulder the burdens & the doubts & the hang ups of the weak !**

D) The love of Christ is to take precedence over our liberty in Christ!

This is the point that Paul is going to drive home in the rest of this section.

2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification

B) V.1-2 Our focus needs to be on our neighbors and not ourselves.

C) Our focus needs to be first and foremost on the edification of our brother –

1) building them up – not tearing them down

Love is the Key and the Ultimate DISPLAY of love in pleasing others over pleasing ourselves – JESUS

3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."

A) Jesus is the ultimate example of this kind of lifestyle

B) Jesus did not please himself – Opposite

1) He chose our need over his own comfort in leaving heaven

C) He laid aside his right to be seen in his glory – by becoming a man – relate to us – save us

Jesus says: Want to follow me – Take up your cross and follow me – follow my example

A) Night before his death upper room – Jesus washed the disciples feet.

B) ¹² So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?" ¹³ You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. ¹⁴ If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. John 13:12-15

C) This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends John 15:12-13

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:3-5

So we are to follow the example of Jesus

A) In fact when Paul says in V.1 that the strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak

B) the word ought can be also translated owe as in you owe to them to bear with them – why is that?

C) Because of what Christ did for us ! 3 For even Christ did not please Himself;

So the strong are to die to themselves in being sensitive to the hang ups of their weaker brother.

A) Now that doesn't mean that we cater to the weaker brother – change everything in the church to suit them.

B) We are not going to ignore truth – or the Big picture – concerning our liberty in Christ

1) We are definitely free to converse and dialogue on these matters with our fellow believers

C) But in some things – a person will not be swayed –

1) **so on an individual basis** – The strong need to be more like Christ

2) and put on Love and grace and sensitivity toward the weak

⁴ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. ⁵ Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶ that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is glorified when we are like minded – God is glorified when there is Harmony

A)When we Keep the main thing the main thing – Simply Jesus

B)One final word - ⁷ Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

C)Think about that statement Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us,

When did Jesus receive you?

A)For some of you – it happened when you were bound up in religion – Earn God's favor – works

B)God opened your heart to his grace –

1)You realized – Jesus' performance was what matters the most – not yours

C)Jesus received you in that place –

Others of you – the exact opposite

A)You weren't doing the religious thing – you were ENEMY OF GOD – REBELLION AGAINST

B)Living to please yourself!

1)All manner of evil and immorality

C)Here is my point – it doesn't matter what group you were in –

Jesus didn't say to you – Clean up your act and then you can come to me

A)Or you religious folks need to understand – that religion is not the answer – then you can come

B)No – he said: You come to me as you are – I will do the rest

C)Paul says – Receive one another just as Christ received you –

1)He is saying – don't wait for your brother to adopt your convictions – Receive them

D)Receive is interesting – To take to one's self or to take as one's companion

To do so as Jesus did – Also means – Jesus made the first move – We are to make the first move

A)To resist our natural tendency – to only gravitate toward people who believe the way that we do

B)That is all of our natural tendency.

C)But the beauty of the body of Christ is when you have people – dwelling in harmony – friends

1)Who don't agree on everything

D)Who are not all the same – but they realize the connection that they have in **Jesus is greater than any difference – that could potentially separate them**

So Weak and strong – put that aside to receive one another in Christ – Jesus is magnified in this place